

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Rev. James David Ford, D.D., offered the following prayer:

Let us pray using the words of the Psalms.

Praise the Lord.

Praise the name of the Lord, give praise, O servants of the Lord, you that stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of the Lord!

Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good; sing to his name, for he is gracious!

O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever.

O give thanks to the God of all gods, for his steadfast love endures forever.

O give thanks to the Lord of lords, for his steadfast love endures forever. Amen.

THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SANDLIN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. SANDLIN led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

GOALS FOR A GENERATION

(Mr. GIBBONS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, goals for a generation is the future of America and it is the responsibility not just of the Republican Party but this Congress as a whole, for it alone will build the bridge to the 21st century.

So far adhering to these goals has brought us, the American people, a balanced budget, tax cuts, a Patient Protection Act, education reform that brightens the future of every child in America and legislation that will help save Social Security.

Under this agenda, we are continuing to improve our public and private schools by sending money directly back to classrooms for more teachers, more computers, safer buildings and teacher testing.

We will also expand the notion that every American should have the financial security that comes from secure jobs. This job security, coupled with a simpler tax code and a fairer IRS, will keep our economy strong and boost savings and America's investments.

Our government should reflect rather than undermine the values that have made America great, faith, family, personal freedom and responsibility. By protecting and strengthening a Republican government and citizen accountability, the Republican Party will continue to deliver on its promises that made these goals a reality for all America.

ON CONGRESSIONAL ACTIVITY

(Mr. GEJDENSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GEJDENSON. Mr. Speaker, I can hardly believe what I have just heard. The Republican Party, which has used its majority in Congress to deny people access to education, to deny them access to health care, refuses to take any steps to deal with HMO reform or the seniors, a quarter of a million of which have lost their health insurance, comes here and claims they are doing a good job.

Harry Truman could not find a rating low enough for this Congress. We should not leave here until we deal with the education issues, until we deal with the health care issues. You had time to try to give big tobacco a \$50 billion tax cut. We ought to spend a few hours in these last days to make sure that senior citizens do not have to be frightened every day about whether or not their HMO is going to drop them. The gentlemen on that side of the aisle get the same kind of constituents as I do. They look to us for help. I do not know what answer you are going to give them. This new freedom that is out there in the health care system means doctors and hospitals and patients have no rights. We have got to change that. The country is going to judge us on that. I hope everybody watching at home calls their Congressman and tells them they want the education package and they want HMO reform. It is the only way to move this group, to let them know that the American people are angry and frustrated, and now is the time to act.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to direct their remarks to the Chair, not to the television viewing audience.

DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN REPUBLICANS AND DEMOCRATS

(Mr. BALLENGER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BALLENGER. Mr. Speaker, I would beg all the Members to roll up their pants. It looks like it is getting heavy around here. The party of bigger government and higher taxes disagrees with the party of less government and

lower taxes. The party of bigger government and higher taxes is threatening to shut down the government if the party of less government and lower taxes stands firm against creating more big government, more Federal bureaucracy in Washington, D.C., more spending on Federal programs.

Well, I got some news for the President and the party of bigger government and higher taxes. My constituents did not send me here to do exactly the opposite of what I have promised I would do. They sent me here to reduce the size of government, not expand it. They sent me here to cut the size of Federal bureaucracy, not make it bigger. They sent me here to give local schools more say over how they run their affairs, not less. They sent me here to make sure that the government lives within its means, not find new ways for government to get around its budget agreements. Regardless of the excuse the Democrat agenda is always the same, more spending and more government.

DEMOCRATS OFFER EDUCATION INITIATIVES

(Mr. PALLONE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity last night to go back to my district in New Jersey and I explained to my constituents that I saw at a function last evening how this do-nothing Congress was looking to adjourn and go home as quickly as possible because the Republican leadership refused to address education initiatives, refused to address the need for HMO reform and was talking about a tax break for the wealthy at the expense of Social Security. We need to save Social Security for future generations. But I was told by my constituents that the one thing that was the most important, that they did not want to see this Congress adjourn until we addressed it, was education, and the Democrats have two initiatives. One is to hire 100,000 teachers, new teachers across the country with Federal dollars that would reduce the size of the classroom, and the second one was to try to provide some funding to help local school districts to modernize their schools, to either build new schools or additions or to upgrade the schools that need to be restored. We are going to make sure that that happens here. We are telling the Republican leadership and our colleagues on the other side we are not going to run out of this place quickly. This has been a do-nothing Congress but at least before you go home, try to do something, put some sort of down payment on these education initiatives that are so important, not to Democrats, not to Republicans but to the American people.

These are the kids. We have to think about the future of this country. The future of this country is in its children and in public education, not vouchers